

Motivation and Attitude in Learning English Language among Junior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

English is a tool for connecting individuals, even if they speak different native languages, and there are aspects that influence learning English, including motivation and attitude. These elements are critical to effectively learning the language. Thus, this study aimed to identify the motivation and attitude of junior high school students. Moreover, it was carried out to determine the relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and their motivation and attitude.

The researcher employed a quantitative with a correlational design in the study. This was done to determine the significant relationship between the said variables. Furthermore, the purposive sampling technique was used in order to gather an accurate number of responses. Additionally, the researcher used the Foreign Language Motivation and Attitude Questionnaire (FLMAQ) as the research instrument. Overall, 37 items were used to measure the motivation and attitude of the learners. The Cronbach's alpha for motivation was .732 and for attitude was .932. A 4-point Likert scale was utilized to rate each item.

The findings indicated that the majority of student respondents "agree" with the statements measuring their motivation and attitude. Furthermore, it was found that there was a significant relationship between motivation and age. As age increases, motivation also increases. On the other hand, two independent variables, which are sex and grade did not exhibit any significance to their motivation. Also, it was revealed that students' profiles did not affect their attitude toward learning the English language.

INTRODUCTION

In today's modern society, English has emerged as a popular medium of communication among speakers of many languages. The English language is widely used around the world, and many people believe that using it is the key to success. Furthermore, in places like schools, people place a high value on the main components that promote language development, such as English. According to (Mohammed, 2022) discovered a significant relationship between gender and students' attitudes toward learning English. His study identified notable differences in performance between male and female students, with female students generally exhibiting more positive attitudes and achieving higher performance levels in learning English compared to their male counterparts. In Asian nations like Thailand, Thai people have evolved a positive approach to studying English. In truth, their government has spent a lot of money on education, but they have not produced favorable results since graduates are not skilled enough in English. (Imsa-ard, 2020) stated that, while Thais are highly driven in language learning, teachers should place a heavy emphasis on learners' motivation. They should grasp the impact of motivation and devise alternate methods and tactics for learners to gain language proficiency. On the other side, the Philippines, neighboring country of Thailand, is renowned for having competitive English-speaking citizens. English predominates in the sphere of education as the majority of academic courses use it, in addition to being used in law and various other professions. According to (Rebusa, Refogio, & San Jose, 2022), the "No Child Left Behind" policy guarantees students access to education. Although it appears that grades are considered a failure, they are only given additional tasks for them to comply with and pass. Moreover, the policy makes the students dependent, relaxed, procrastinating, and overconfident because of the attention given to them. Through this policy, the real essence of the grading system is gone, and grades don't affect learners' motivation toward language acquisition. However, not every learner is the same. Junior high school students who attend class do not share the same level of motivation and attitude. Furthermore, they have distinct personalities.

This study focused on identifying the motivation and attitude of junior high school students. Apart from that, it was carried out to identify the relationship between the respondents' demographic profile, their motivation and attitude. The main respondents were junior high school students, specifically those in grades 9 and 10, and were currently enrolled at De La Salle Araneta University.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used quantitative research with a correlational design. Quantitative research is the study of phenomena using numerical data and statistical, analytical, or computing tools (Adedoyin, 2020). In this kind of research, the data are analyzed by mathematically-based methods, particularly statistics. To determine the motivation and attitude of junior high school students and to know whether their demographic profile is significant for these factors, statistics were implied.

(Cherry, 2023) stated that the goal of a correlational method design, a subset of non-experimental research designs, is to evaluate the relationship between the variables without changing them. The purpose of this is to determine whether or not variable 1 and variable 2 have a meaningful relationship. The results of this kind of study can be either favorable or negative, or they can show no correlation at all. Overall, this study was considered correlational as the researcher's purpose was to know whether the respondents' demographic profile was connected to their motivation and attitude.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at the De La Salle Araneta University-Integrated School located at the Victoneta Avenue, Potrero, Malabon City. It was done at the Integrated School building where the junior high school students were designated. The researcher identified classrooms of grade 9 and 10 students which were the primary subjects of this study.

Sampling Technique

In this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling as the sampling technique. (Crossman, 2020) stated that a purposive sample is a non-probability sample chosen based on demographic characteristics and the study's objectives.

Particularly, the student respondents were grade 9 and 10 students; thus, the searcher relied on her own judgment when she chose the members of population who participated in the study.

Moreover, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the student, which were from grades 9 and 10.

Participants of the Study

This study aimed to gather 248 responses from grade 9 and 10 students enrolled at De La Salle Araneta University-Integrated School.

The researcher decided to use a Raosoft calculator to determine the sample size of the respondents per year level. Raosoft size calculator has a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. With this being said, it was a useful indicator to complete the number of responses from each grade level.

The total number of students enrolled in grade 9 was 185, and the target population is 126. And, for grade 10, the total population is 178; thus, the target respondents were 122. With this, the researcher gathered 248 responses from students in different grade levels, and achieved an accurate number of responses.

Research Instrument

The first part of the questionnaire involved the demographic profile of the respondents, such as age, sex and

previous GWA in English. These variables were significant to achieve the purpose of this study.

Moreover, the researcher used the Foreign Language Motivation and Attitude Questionnaire (FLMAQ), whose validity and reliability have been measured on 245 samples in the study conducted by Ghorban Dordinejad. The instrument was adopted from (Bargard, Sharafoddin, & Afzalaghaee, 2020). Overall, 37 items were used to measure the motivation and attitude of the learners. In the relevant questionnaire, 13 questions focused on motivation. These items were 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 20, 21, 23, 24, 32, 34, and 36. Meanwhile the remaining 24 items focused on attitude. These items were 1, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, and 37. Additionally, the Cronbach's alpha for motivation was .732, while the alpha for attitude was .902. As a result, the questionnaire had strong validity and reliability. Additionally, a 4-point Likert scale was utilized to rate each item: 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree.

Data Gathering Procedure

To collect data, the researcher produced a consent form that had to be accepted by both the college of education dean and the junior high school principal. Following permission, the researcher obtained the names of grade 9 and 10 pupils currently enrolled for the school year 2023-2024. Furthermore, pupils were taught what to do and how to complete the survey. Then, a group chat was created in MS Teams for each section to send the survey link. Finally, the researcher verified that the submission of answers was complete.

To determine the outcomes of the total respondents, all the surveys that were collected were collated for statistical analysis.

Statistical Treatment

The data required for this study were analyzed and computed using statistical treatment. The study used of the following:

1. **Frequency and percentage.** This was used to compute the respondents' profile which includes age, sex and their previous GWA in English.
2. **Mean.** This was used to identify the mean score of students' motivation and attitude and to know whether they have high or low motivation and positive or negative attitude.
3. **Pearson Correlation Coefficient.** This was used to determine the relationship of students' demographic profile, their motivation and attitude.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the interpretation and results of the gathered data.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Category	Subcategory	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	14-15	171	69.00%
	16-17	76	30.60%
	18	1	0.40%
Sex	Male	108	43.50%
	Female	140	56.50%
Previous GWA in English	74-79	14	5.70%
	80-85	71	28.60%
	86-91	125	50.40%
	92-96	38	15.30%

Table 1 presented the demographic profile of the respondents, encompassing a total population of 248 students from grades 9 and 10. The majority of respondents are aged 14 and 15 years old (n=171, 69%). Among the participants, female students represent the largest proportion, with a frequency of 140, constituting 56.5% of the sample. Furthermore, the majority of respondents, totaling 125 students, had a general weighted average between 86 to 91.

The table indicated that the age range of the respondents spans from 14 to 18 years of age. The gender distribution includes 108 male students and 140 female students. Lastly, general weighted average in English for these students ranges from 74 to 96, with the most common grades falling between 86 to 91.

Table 2 Mean Score of Student-Respondents' Motivation

Item No.	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
2	I'm waiting for English class time.	3	0.66	Agree
3	I feel very comfortable when I have to speak English.	3.2	0.7	Agree
5	My parents try to help me in learning the language.	3.04	0.81	Agree
6	I prefer to spend more time in English class and less time in other classes.	3.74	0.78	Agree
8	My parents feel that learning a language is very important to me.	3.36	0.68	Agree
9	Speaking English does not bother me at all.	3.41	0.64	Agree
20	My parents emphasize the importance that English will have for me when I graduate.	3.28	0.71	Agree
21	I keep in touch with English almost every day.	3.38	0.58	Agree
23	My family is very interested in everything I do in English class.	2.79	0.87	Disagree
24	If I were you, I would spend all my time learning the language.	2.9	0.8	Disagree
32	My parents insist that I ask the teacher for help if I have a problem with English.	3.08	0.82	Agree
34	I try to understand everything I see or hear in English.	3.51	0.53	Agree
36	My parents feel that it is better for me to continue learning English throughout my university studies.	3.28	0.69	Agree
	General Weighted Average	3.169	0.528	Agree

Table 2 presents the mean score of respondents' motivation to learn the English language. In general, respondents' motivation reported an overall mean score of 3.169, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.528. This means that the majority of them "agreed" with all indicators measuring their motivation. It was revealed that students in grades 9 and 10 at De La Salle Araneta University-Integrated School have high motivation to learn English.

The statement "I prefer time in English class and less time in other classes" had the highest mean score of 3.74 among the items surveyed. This suggests that, on average, respondents expressed a relatively strong preference for spending more time in English class compared to other subjects. The high mean score indicates that a significant number of participants feel that English class is particularly valuable or enjoyable, more so than other classes in the curriculum. (Learning, 2024), stated that students tend to enjoy English class because of its wide benefits, including the development of vocabulary and grammar skills, which are essential for specific career

paths. Additionally, English helps students improve their reading, writing, and public speaking abilities, which are important as they grow older.

Moreover, the indicator "I try to understand everything I see or hear in English" means that respondents put a lot of effort into understanding English whenever they encounter it. With an average score of 3.51, it shows that they often or usually do this. This might include listening carefully to conversations, watching media, following instructions, and reading various texts in English. The result showed that students are committed to learning and always try to understand English in different situations. Meanwhile, the indicators "My family is very interested in everything I do in English class" and "If I were you, I would spend all my time learning the language" received the lowest average scores, 2.79 and 2.90, respectively. These scores indicate that respondents generally disagreed with these statements. In other words, most of them do not feel that their family is highly interested in their English class activities. (Zhou, 2020) stated that parental involvement is important for students because performance is poor when parents are not interested in their children's language learning activities. This means that the parents of the respondents should put time and effort into influencing their children to gain positive results. Furthermore, respondents do not believe that spending all their time learning the language would be advisable.

Table 3 Significant Relationship Between Motivation and Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Computed R-value	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	0.154	0.015	Rejected	Significant

Table 3 illustrates the connection between respondents' motivation considering their demographic profile. The calculated Pearson r correlation indicates a significant positive correlation between the age of respondents and their motivation to learn English ($r = 0.154$, $p = 0.015$). This correlation suggests that as the age of respondents increases, their motivation to learn the English language also increase. Since there is a statistically significant relationship between motivation and attitude, considering the demographic profile of the respondents, the first null hypothesis was refuted.

Previous research that was published provided support for the current study's findings. (Becirovic, 2017) asserted that there was a strong correlation between the age of language learners and their level of motivation. Students get more motivated and have a more upbeat mood as they become older. The English language's widespread practical use makes this possible. Students typically come to understand the importance of language as they get older.

Wong's study came to the same conclusion. According to her research, older Chinese immigrants are more motivated than their younger counterparts. She explained the reasons. First, they are instrumentally motivated because they have witnessed the usefulness of English in their life. Finally, some of them are aware that proficiency in English is a prerequisite for college admission. To summarize, age has a significant impact on a learner's motivation and attitude toward learning English.

The similar finding was reported by (Bargard, Sharafoddin, & Afzalaghaee, 2020), who found a statistically significant correlation between students' motivation toward learning and their educational attainment. Students' age increases along with their motivation as they move through the grades. It follows that students' motivation and attitude toward learning are influenced by their age.

On the other hand, it has been shown that both sex and English grade have no significant association with respondents' motivation and toward studying English. (Abdulrahman, et al., 2023) confirmed this. They concluded that neither gender nor grade level had an impact on respondents' motivation. In terms of sex, (Becirovic, 2017) contradicted the result of this findings, as his research revealed that motivation towards language learning is inextricably linked to gender. He came to the conclusion in his research that there are notable differences between learners who are male and female. Furthermore, when it comes to learning English, female students typically perform better than male students.

Meanwhile, (Muhammad & Ghani, 2020) strengthened the present study because they concluded that there is

no significant difference in the motivation of male and female respondents. It demonstrates that gender has no bearing on their motivation. They also provided reasons. Back then, there was a problem with women being denied education since men were superior to them. However, today, it is no longer practiced. Women no longer face prejudice in the home or in society as a result of educational knowledge. Since equality is observed in both sexes, motivation and attitude toward learning are no longer gender-related.

Furthermore, (Klein, 2020) came to conclusion that the reason why learners' motivation is not affected by their grades is because of the essence of grades and the grading system itself. (Rebusa, Refogio, & San Jose, 2022) noted that the Philippines has policies about the grading system. This ensures the safeguarding of children's right to a good education. Grades have no effect on pupils' motivation toward learning, which is due to complacent educational policies. Additionally, this study's results disprove the reinforcement theory, which holds that students' motivation will decline along with their grades as a result of their behavior. According to the findings, motivation toward learning English is unaffected by grades.

Table 4 Mean Score of Student-Respondents Attitude

Item No.	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1	Learning English is important; because it will allow me to meet and talk to many different people.	3.74	0.43	Agree
4	Learning English is important; because I will be able to communicate more easily with English-speaking people.	3.65	0.51	Agree
7	Learning English is really great.	3.48	0.58	Agree
10	I wish I could read newspapers and magazines in different foreign languages.	3.34	0.75	Agree
11	English speakers are very sociable and kind.	3.24	0.7	Agree
12	Learning English is a waste of time. (<i>Reverse scored</i>)	3.19	1.64	Agree
13	I like to learn English as much as possible.	3.37	0.6	Agree
14	English speakers have a lot to be proud of; because they have offered a lot of value to the world.	3.33	0.62	Agree
15	Learning foreign languages is not important to me. (<i>Reverse scored</i>)	3.18	1.4	Agree
16	Studying the language is important because it will make me more literate.	3.43	0.57	Agree
17	Learning English is important, because it will enable me to better understand and praise the English lifestyle.	3.41	0.62	Agree
18	I have a strong desire to learn all aspects of the English language.	3.21	0.73	Agree
19	I would like to get acquainted with more English speakers.	3.29	0.64	Agree
22	If I want to live in a country, I will try to learn the language of that country.	3.57	0.56	Agree
25	I wish I spoke English fluently.	3.35	0.75	Agree
26	Most English speakers are kind and easy to get along with; I'm happy to be friends with them.	3.31	0.63	Agree
27	I enjoy meeting people who speak a foreign language.	3.41	0.61	Agree
28	I really enjoy learning English.	3.31	0.62	Agree

29	The more I know English speakers, the more I like them.	2.29	0.63	Agree
30	I prefer to have another language teacher.	3.43	0.98	Agree
31	I really like learning foreign languages.	3.37	0.61	Agree
33	I really like my English class. I have more English to learn in the future.	3.28	0.61	Agree
35	I love learning English.	3.3	0.65	Agree
37	I want to learn English so well that it becomes normal for me.	3.57	0.57	Agree
	General Weighted Average	3.419	0.503	Agree

Table 4 demonstrates the attitude of junior high school students toward learning the English language. The overall computed mean is 3.419 with a standard deviation of 0.503, which indicates agreeableness. The majority of the respondents "agreed" with the statements measuring their attitude, and based on the results, their attitude tends to be positive.

The high mean scores of 3.74 and 3.65 for items 1 and 4, or statements, "Learning English is important because it will allow me to meet and talk to many different people," and "Learning English is important because I will be able to communicate more easily with English-speaking people," suggest a strong inclination among students towards language learning as a means to engage socially. This indicates their keen interest in acquiring English proficiency to facilitate interactions and connections with a diverse range of individuals. Learners have a positive attitude toward language learning because they want to interact and socialize with others.

Following the previously mentioned items, item 37 presented the statement, "I want to learn English so well that it becomes normal for me." The calculated mean score for this item is 3.57, which falls within the range corresponding to a verbal interpretation of "agree." This indicates that, on average, respondents express a positive attitude toward achieving a level of proficiency in English where its use becomes second nature to them. This suggests a strong desire among the respondents to integrate English seamlessly into their daily lives, highlighting the importance they place on mastering the language.

Table 5 Significant Relationship between Attitude and Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Computed R-value	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	0.124	0.052	Accepted	Not Significant
Sex	0.037	0.561	Accepted	Not Significant
English GWA	0.061	0.339	Accepted	Not Significant

Table 5 illustrates the relationship between students' attitudes toward learning English and their profiles. The findings indicate no significant relationship between attitude and learners' profiles. Consequently, the second null hypothesis, which states, "There is no significant relationship between attitude considering the demographic profile of the student-respondents," was accepted.

Regarding age, (Alaga, 2016) supports these findings by demonstrating that age does not significantly influence learners' attitudes. The study revealed that respondents generally hold a positive attitude, and age is not a contributing factor.

In terms of sex, (Mohammed, 2022) contradicts the present study's findings. According to Mohammed's study, gender differences do exist in students' attitudes, with girls displaying a more positive attitude towards English than boys. These differences may be attributed to the varied teaching strategies and classroom activities employed by English teachers, which might cater differently to female and male students. Additionally, the design and content of the English curriculum might not align with the interests and needs of male students.

(Mohammed, 2022)

Furthermore, (Alaga, 2016) found a moderate correlation between learners' grades and their attitudes. Her study demonstrated that as learners' attitudes toward English improve, their academic performance, as reflected in their grades, also improves. This positive correlation is not evident in the present study's findings.

CONCLUSION

The majority of the respondents were 14 to 15 years old, with more females (56.5%) than males (43.5%). Additionally, most respondents received grades between 86 and 91, making up half of the total responses.

1. Students have high motivation. They prefer English compared to other subjects. Meanwhile, respondents' parents seemed to not be involved in their children's English language learning.
2. Motivation is significant for students' age. As motivation increases, age increases too. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected.
3. Students' attitudes tend to be positive. They learn English as a means to engage socially.
4. Attitude and learner profile, which include age, sex, and grade, are not significant. There, the second null hypothesis is accepted.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusion drawn, analysis, and interpretations, the following are recommended by the researcher:

1. The population surveyed was not equal, as there were more females than males. Therefore, future researchers can use the non-random sampling technique in order to avoid biases.
2. Parents should put effort and attention into their children's language learning because parental involvement is important to increase language performance.
3. Teachers should implement age-appropriate motivational strategies to enhance students' English language learning.
4. School administrators can create programs that will make students engage socially. This can help increase their positive attitude towards learning the language.

As the profile did not exhibit a correlation to learners' attitudes, future researchers can use other variables that might yield better results.

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